



MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

By

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DEPUTY PREMIER & MINISTER OF PUBLIC SAFETY

BERMUDA OMNIBUS SURVEY 2ND QUARTER 2013 – NEIGHBOURHOOD SAFETY

12TH JULY 2013

Mr. Speaker, this Government came to office against the background of considerable public concern about safety and security in Bermuda.

People expressed themselves strongly about the need for their leaders to tackle the issues of community safety.

Mr. Speaker, we heard those concerns and immediately took action to do whatever we could to make Bermuda safer.

Honourable Members will be aware of this Government's commitment to support the Bermuda Police Service in **their** efforts to make Bermuda safer. In February, this was manifested in the increased financial support in the Police budget with funding for an additional twenty (20) officers to swell the ranks of the BPS to 450 and a total

funding commitment of \$50,000 to strengthen the Police Complaints Authority.

Mr. Speaker, the success of the Bermuda Police Service and the test of the Ministry of Public Safety's investment in their core functions is seen not only in the number of crimes prevented or solved. It is not only to be seen in the sound convictions and long sentences achieved through the Courts. It is not even properly measured only through cash seized or weapons taken off the streets.

All of this counts for nothing **Mr. Speaker**, if the people of Bermuda do not *feel safe* in their own

homes and in their neighbourhoods. Making Bermuda safer means making our people feel safer.

Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members will be familiar with the Bermuda Omnibus Survey which is conducted periodically on a variety of issues in the community.

Mr. Speaker, in a survey taken between 4th and 19th June of this year, of a sample of 404 residents over the age of 18, respondents were asked about safety in their neighbourhood.

I am pleased to advise Honourable Members that almost all Bermuda residents report feeling safe in their own neighbourhood, and far more residents

now indicate feeling extremely safe. In June 2012 91% of residents indicated that they felt extremely or mostly safe; in June of 2013, that number had risen to 98%, an increase of 9%. Additionally, **Mr. Speaker**, in June 2012 9% of respondents said they felt mostly or extremely unsafe; while in June 2013 only 2% indicated they felt mostly unsafe and 0% felt extremely unsafe.

Mr. Speaker, results show that nearly all residents feel either extremely or mostly safe in their neighbourhood with the degree of feeling safe having improved dramatically in the last year. 28% of residents report feeling extremely safe, an increase of 16 percentage points since this question was last posed.

Mr. Speaker, let me be very clear; this does not mean that our crime problem is solved; it does not mean that we have eliminated the culture of gangs in the community and it by no means indicates that the work of the Bermuda Police Service in the fight against guns, gangs, drugs and violence is over.

These results indicate that we are on the right track and that we must continue to do what we have been doing in order to quell the violence and anti-social behaviour.

Mr. Speaker, residents were also asked about their current feelings of safety in their neighbourhood compared to those from six months ago. The majority of Bermuda residents indicate that they

feel they are as safe as they were six months ago and of note, far fewer residents feel their neighbourhoods have become less safe. In June 2012, 58% indicated they felt as safe as they did 6 months ago; by June of 2013 that number had increased to 73%. Conversely, 31% said they felt less safe in June 2012 and that number dropped to 9% in June 2013. **Mr. Speaker**, 10% of respondents said they felt safer in June 2012 while that finding increased to 18% by June 2013.

Mr. Speaker, the results are encouraging but also indicate that there is still work to do. Male residents are more likely to report that they feel extremely safe compared to female residents. Crimes against women and the feeling of vulnerability women

experience must continue to be addressed so that safety becomes less dictated by gender.

Mr. Speaker, these are hard-won results. This Government has kept the focus on the issues surrounding public safety and in so doing the community's confidence in the ability of our security services is increasing. This has come as a result of sustained effort on the part of the Police and validates the focus set out by the Commissioner and his senior command on guns, gangs, drugs and violence.

We will continue to bring innovation and a “can-do” approach to the initiatives required to support the Police.

Gang Mediation, the Gun Bounty, strengthening the Inter-Agency Gang Task Force, supporting the growth of Neighbourhood Watch groups and engaging the community at all levels has played a key part in inspiring public confidence in the work we are doing.

Our priority is to continue to live up to our promise of making Bermuda safer.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.